

tributed to the open conditions produced by the forest fire, which occurred in 1910 and covered an area of many thousand acres.

Through an oversight the following species was omitted from the list of 1920.

Charadrius semipalmatus. SEMIPALMATED PLOVER. A specimen was taken from among several individuals seen on a mud-flat along the Isabella river, about a mile below Rice Lake, in August, 1912. I have not seen the species elsewhere in the region covered.—CHARLES E. JOHNSON, *Department of Zoology, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kans.*

RECENT LITERATURE

Barbour's 'Birds of Cuba.'—The Nuttall Ornithological Club has just issued another of its beautifully gotten up 'Memoirs.' This, the sixth issue, treats of the birds of the island of Cuba and is by Dr. Thomas Barbour¹ who, as is well known, has made many trips to the island and is thoroughly fitted for the task that he has undertaken. His aim as he explains in the introduction is not only to describe the collections of birds that he has made in the island, but also to provide a work that will be useful to the English speaking visitors and residents who desire to know something of Cuban bird-life and we feel that he has been eminently successful in carrying out his plan.

As we turn the introductory pages we read the same story that is being told in almost every part of the world, of the destruction of forests to permit the constantly increasing cultivation of some commercial crop—sugar cane in the case of Cuba—and the consequent decrease in the native bird-life. Some species are already extinct while others have reached various stages on the same road, the Cuban Ivory-billed Woodpecker being one that has apparently but recently reached the end of the journey.

There is a brief historical sketch of ornithological activity in Cuba, and of the bird collections which exist on the island, of which the Gundlach collection of mounted birds, kept in permanently sealed cabinets, and the modern collection of mounts and skins, belonging to Dr. Charles T. Ramsden, are the most important.

The geography and geology of the island are described in some detail. While Dr. Barbour agrees with geologists that Cuba has never had a land connection with the United States, he does consider that there has been continental connection as evidenced by the more recent discoveries of vertebrate fossils, in Cuba as well as in Haiti and Porto Rico.

¹ *Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, No. VI. The Birds of Cuba*, by Thomas Barbour. With four plates. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Published by the Club. June, 1923, sm. quarto, pp. 1--141

The several physical areas of the island with their characteristic birds are described and there is an account of the climate. To give one a practical idea of the size of Cuba the author states that if superimposed on the United States with one end at St Louis, the other would be at Jacksonville, Florida, while the complicated coast line is about 6800 miles, and the area about 44,000 square miles. Most Americans he finds have no conception of the large size of Cuba.

The main text of the work consists of an annotated list of the 273 species recorded from the island, the North American migrants being very briefly treated while the native species are more fully discussed, with observations on their habits and often a description of field characters to aid in identification. There is an index but no bibliography, while four excellent photogravure plates illustrate characteristic scenery and the conversion of virgin forest into cane fields.

A hasty analysis of the avifauna shows that exclusive of the water birds and Accipitres there are 70 indigenous species and 73 migrants from North America so that one may fully appreciate Dr. Barbour's statement that during October and April when the migrations are at their height there is to be seen in Cuba the greatest medley of northern and tropical types which can be seen anywhere in the world.

The author acknowledges assistance from Mr. Outram Bangs in matters of nomenclature, he having guided him through "the intricate maze of transitory change" that is "fashionable for the moment," and we thus find many innovations in names as compared with the older lists, although it is gratifying to find that there is a definite stand against the excessive multiplication of genera.

Dr. Barbour has produced an admirable volume which is most welcome, since thirty years have elapsed since the appearance of Gundlach's 'Ornithologia Cubana.'

While Dr. Barbour does not attempt to list all of the collections that have been made in Cuba or the ornithologists that have visited the island, we might add, for the sake of record, that Dr. Wm. L. Abbott made a good collection at Santiago in the eighties which is now in the Philadelphia Academy. The reviewer's pleasure in reading the pages of Dr. Barbour's attractive work has been no little enhanced by the fact that he, like some others mentioned by the author, obtained his first impressions of tropical bird life on a very brief visit to Cuba in 1890, and doubtless very many others who have visited the island in recent years will find a similar enjoyment in perusing this book, while to ornithologists interested in the Antillean fauna it will be indispensable.—W. S.

Horsfield's 'Sidelights on Birds.'—This English bird book,¹ we are told in the "Foreword" is intended "to discuss some of the problems

¹ *Sidelights on Birds. An Introduction to the Study of Bird Life.* By H. Knight Horsfield. With a foreword by W. Eagle Clarke. Illustrated by Plates after J. Wolf and A. Thorburn and photographs from nature. D. Appleton and Company, New York—MCMXXIII, pp. 1-224, 19 illustrations, one in colors. \$4.00